

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-10

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S/ S: MR. BARNES

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R 100051 Z APR 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

S E C R E T STATE 065984

EXDIS

FOLL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO AMMAN TEHRAN KUWAIT FROM JIDDA

09 APR 73 REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

S E C R E T JIDDA 1451

EXDIS

DEPT PASS USCINCEUR AND SECDEF

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MASS KU

SUBJ: KUWAITI REQUEST FOR US ASSISTANCE

REF: A. JIDDA 1319, TEHRAN 2166; C. KUWAIT 1147

1. AMBASSADOR HAS RAISED WITH BOTH DEPUTY FONMIN MAS' UD
AND MINSTATE FONAFAIRS SAQQAF QUESTION OF PRESENT
KUWAIT- IRAQ TENSION. NEITHER HAS BEEN VERY FORTH-
COMING. MAS' UD' S UNENLIGHTENING REACTION CONTAINED REFTEL A.

2. WHEN I MENTIONED SUBJECT TO SAQQAF APRIL 8, HE
COMMENTED THAT THERE ARE ENOUGH QUARRELS BETWEEN ARABS
THESE DAYS AND ONE MORE IS TOO MANY. HE WAS HOPEFUL
VISIT OF IRAQI DELEGATION TO KUWAIT MIGHT YIELD RESULTS.

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HE THOUGH IT POSSIBLE KUWAITIS WOULD BE ABLE BUY OFF IRAQ WITH SUBSTANTIAL LOAN OR GRANT. SAQQAF HAD RETURNED TO SAUDI ARABIA FROM BEIRUT ONLY EVENING BEFORE I SAW HIM AND MAY NOT HAVE BEEN WELL INFORMED.

3. HOWEVER, MORE INCLINED INTERPRET SAUDI RETICENCE AS REFLECTING STRONG SAUDI HOPE THEY MAY BE ABLE STAY DISENGAGED. SAUDIS, AS WE KNOW, HAVE BEEN WORRIED ABOUT IRAQI FEINTS AT THEIR OWN BORDER; SAUDI ARMY IS AT PRESENT ENTIRELY IN WESTERN REGIONS, I. E., JORDAN, TABUK, TAIF AND KHAMIS MUSHAYT. THERE ARE NO TANKS IN EASTERN PART OF COUNTRY. HOWEVER, NATIONAL GUARD UNITS COULD BE MOVED ABOUT AS DEMONSTRATION OF STRENGTH. (GUARD HAS, OF COURSE, ONLY SMALL ARMS AND CREIONS OF KENYAN TROOPS AT LIBO (4055 EAST, 0025 NORTH). SOMALIS STATE PERMANENT BARRACKS AND AIR STRIP HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED AT THIS POST WHICH ONLY FIVE MILES FROM SOMALI BORDER.

4. MILATT STATED HE BELIEVED MORALE AND LOYALTY OF SOMALI FORCES HAD DETERIORATED IN LAST FEW MONTHS. HE SENSED MORE GRUMBLING AGAINST REGIME, OFTEN COUCHED IN ANTI-SOVIET FRAMEWORK. MILITARY ALSO CONCERNED AT LACK OF SOMALI RESPONSE TO ETHIOPIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS. MILATT NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT WORD "ETHIOPIA" WAS STILL SUFFICIENT TO SILENCE GRUMBLING AND UNIFY MILITARY AGAINST SOMALIA'S TRADITIONAL ENEMY.

5. MILATT SAID THAT 25 NEW SOVIET TANKS (T-34 S) HAD BEEN DELIVERED THROUGH BERBERA AND THAT FORMER SINGLE TANK BATTALION IN SOMALI NORTHERN SECTOR NOW SPLIT INTO TWO BATTALIONS EACH EQUIPPED WITH 30 TANKS (PREVIOUS BATTALION HAD 40 TANKS).

6. ASKED ABOUT NUMBER OF SOVIET ADVISERS, MILATT REPLIED HE UNSURE OF TOTAL NUMBER BUT GUESSED NUMBER NOW 400-500. HE THOUGHT THIS NUMBER EXTREMELY HIGH FOR SOMALI UNITS AND THAT SOMALIS KNEW THIS AND GRUMBLED ABOUT EXCESSIVE NUMBER OF SOVIETS WHO KEPT GETTING IN WAY.

7. MILATT CONFIRMED SOVIET CONSTRUCTION UNDER WAY OF NEW AIRPORT AT BERBERA APPROXIMATELY TWO MILES WEST OF PRESENT AIRPORT AND OPPOSITE NEW PORT. HE ESTIMATED COMPLETION OF CONSTRUCTION IN FOUR- TO- FIVE MONTHS.

8. MILATT HAD NO REPORTS OF SOMALI TROOP MOVEMENTS TOWARD BORDER. HE THOUGHT GSDR BELIEVED PRESENT POSITIONING OF SOMALI TROOPS WAS ADEQUATE.

9. ASIDE FROM TANKS AND FOUR IL-28 BOMBERS, HE HAS NO NEWS OF ANY RECENT SOVIET MILITARY DELIVERIES. HE STILL CONSIDERS SOMALI ARMY INCAPABLE OF ANY SUSTAINED ACTION AGAINST ETHIOPIA. LOORAM UNQUOTE ROGERS

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